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Using the Arts to Support the Arts: A Creative, Community-University Partnership Approach to Building Arts Inclusivity in Economically-Deprived Communities

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Key words: arts-based research; community-university partnership; collaborative poetics; participatory research; arts and health

Abstract: There is robust evidence supporting the positive impacts of the arts on health and wellbeing; however, researchers suggest that the poorest in society are significantly less likely to engage with the arts than the wealthy. In this article, we describe a creative, community-university partnership between the Hangleton & Knoll Project and the University of Brighton, where we aimed to investigate and tackle this "participation gap." Using the participatory arts-based method of collaborative poetics, we found that, contrary to claims in the literature, local residents valued and engaged with a wide range of art forms; however, their access to the arts was limited by issues including money, travel and illness. By communicating these findings creatively to a broad range of stakeholders, we were able to stimulate greater investment in the arts locally, with steps taken towards the establishment of a dedicated community arts venue. In this article we reproduce some of the arts-based outputs we created, using these to criticize the reductionist understanding of the arts that lies beneath "participation gap" claims and to demonstrate the enormous potential that can be unlocked when universities and local communities collaborate creatively as equal partners.

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1. Introduction

Inequalities in health and wellbeing across different socio-economic groups are now well established (MARMOT et al., 2010), as are the widespread benefits of the arts on individual and collective health, wellbeing and flourishing (see e.g., All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, APPGAHW, 2017; COHEN et al., 2006; FANCOURT & FINN, 2019). It is commonly argued, however, that people from lower socio-economic status groups participate significantly less in the arts than do those from high socio-economic status groups (e.g., APPGAHW, 2017; NEELANDS et al., 2015). Authors who have contributed to this "participation gap" literature have argued that individuals from lower social status backgrounds have disproportionately low engagement in the arts, either because they do not see how the arts are relevant to them or because they are unable to access them. This suggests that it is important to encourage and support these communities to participate in the arts, and to better understand the positive outcomes of arts engagement. [1]

Although we can see the merits of this argument, we believe that this is a partial picture set in overly simplistic tones. It does not fully reflect our experiences amongst the members of these communities with whom we live, work and socialize. Rather, in our work and personal lives within economically-deprived communities, we have encountered again and again a true passion for the arts and a strong understanding of the value of arts engagement. Yet we are also well aware of the paucity of arts provision in these communities. For Nicole, this is an immediate and pressing issue within the context of her work in Hangleton and Knoll, an economically-deprived area in the East of England. [2]

These observations led us to form a community-university research partnership between the Hangleton & Knoll Project (HKP) and the University of Brighton. Using the method of collaborative poetics (CP), we worked with one another and with local residents to understand more about how local people understand and engage with the arts, and to agitate for greater support for the arts locally. CP is a participatory arts-based research method, in which researchers, artists and community partners collaborate as a "research collective," using the arts (and particularly poetry) to explore and communicate their lived experiences (JOHNSON, CARSON-APSTEIN, BANDEROB & MACUALAY-RETTINO, 2017; JOHNSON et al., 2018). We found that CP offered an accessible and creative approach which reflected and honored both the project focus and the great value that the arts hold for co-researchers. Participatory arts-based research further enabled us to work with co-researchers to foreground the voices of local residents and to communicate our findings in an impactful way to local stakeholders. This has led to substantive moves to improve access to the arts locally, and demonstrates the enormous potential that can be unlocked when universities and local communities work together creatively as equal partners. [3]

In this article, we begin by reviewing literature on the health and wellbeing impacts of the arts, and on the participatory gap in arts engagement. We then describe the methodological approach used, and locate our work within literature

on community-university partnerships, arts-based research and participatory research. Finally, we consider our research findings and impact in the light of this literature. [4]

2. Arts Impacts Across the Population: Health, Wellbeing and Inclusivity

"Art" is often used as a proxy for visual arts like painting, drawing and sculpture. The "arts," however, can be applied to a much wider range of creative pursuits, including dance, literature, theater, music and crafts. We follow the All Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing (APPGHAW, 2017) in adopting the latter, broader definition. The inclusion of crafts here gestures to an understanding of the arts as spanning beyond an elite notion of "high" art or big "C" creativity created by and for those rich in cultural capital, to incorporate a more accessible, everyday or small "c" creativity (see KAUFMAN & BEGHETTO, 2009 on different types of creativity). This brings into scope such diverse creative pursuits as textiles, comic making, culinary arts and even gardening. [5]

There is a wealth of evidence that the arts impact wellbeing and healthy development across the lifespan, as demonstrated in several recent high profile meta analyses and reviews. These reports have indicated that artistic and cultural engagement can reduce medication use and visits to doctors (APPGAHW, 2017; BIRCHALL et al., 2018; COHEN et al., 2006; FANCOURT & FINN, 2019); moderate symptoms in chronic health conditions, including diabetes, dementia, stroke and respiratory disease; decrease mortality rates; reduce pain and fatigue; and increase healthy behaviors (APPGAHW, 2017; FANCOURT & FINN, 2019). Furthermore, arts and culture can enhance wellbeing across a range of dimensions, strengthening individuals' sense of self-worth, self-confidence, self-esteem and positive emotional expression/regulation, and reducing incidences/severity of depression, anxiety, stress, loneliness and suicidal ideation (APPGAHW, 2017; BIRCHALL et al., 2018; COHEN et al., 2006; FANCOURT & FINN, 2019). Beyond basic mental and physical health, arts and culture can enable people to flourish, providing meaning, purpose and joy (NEELANDS et al., 2015). The arts can thus be considered as social determinants of both physical and mental health. [6]

Scholars have proposed a wide range of different mechanisms through which the arts might produce these health and wellbeing impacts. Some of these mechanisms focus on individual impacts that could derive from solitary artmaking. These include: increased self-efficacy and mastery of the environment (APPGAHW, 2017); enhanced self-esteem and confidence from creative accomplishment (APPGAHW, 2017; PATTERSON & PERLSTEIN, 2011); building "cognitive reserve" to protect against later cognitive decline (PATTERSON & PERLSTEIN, 2011); stimulation of the senses and imagination (FANCOURT & FINN, 2019); providing meaning (BIRCHALL et al., 2018); and strengthening resilience (ibid.). Other proposed mechanisms, however, are associated with groups/communities coming together for collective artmaking. These include: providing opportunities for social interaction and tacking social

isolation (APPGAHW, 2017; FANCOURT & FINN, 2019; PATTERSON & PERLSTEIN, 2011); the development of social skills and networks (APPGAHW, 2017); developing a sense of belonging (BAKLIEN, 2000); and enhanced empathy for self and others (EWBANK, 2020). [7]

Furthermore, there is evidence that collective arts activities can support community wellbeing, cohesion and development.[1] Art in this context can be used to teach tolerance and the value of diverse perspectives, stimulating empathy and understanding, encouraging dialogue and connecting communities across race, class and gender lines (SCHER, 2007). Collective artistic engagement can reduce social isolation, facilitate group working and prosocial behavior, strengthen interpersonal relationships, build trust, and create a sense of belonging (APPGAHW, 2017; BIRCHALL et al., 2018; FANCOURT & FINN, 2019). It can facilitate a sense of agency and community, supporting communities to develop "narratives of action in response to social change" (MULLIGAN, SCANLON & WELCH, 2008, p.50; see also NEELANDS et al., 2015; SCHER, 2007). [8]

Artists and community workers have long known about, and capitalized on, these widespread benefits. Their work has covered multiple different models and an array of allied terminology, including "community arts," "socially-engaged art," "community-based arts initiatives," "participatory arts-based research," and "arts activism" (e.g., LEE et al., n.d.; SOHN & BAKER, 2016). While there are many differences between the philosophical/theoretical groundings and practices of these approaches, they share in common a desire to work collaboratively, creatively and artistically with communities in order to explore, communicate and address issues that are important to members of these communities, and a belief that the collaborative art-making process is at least as important as the "products" created. [9]

Access to the arts is not equal across all social groups, however. Instead there is a widely acknowledged "participation gap" (APPGAHW, 2017; BIRCHALL et al., 2018; NEELANDS et al., 2015), where people in lower socio-economic status groups, living in economically-deprived areas, with lower educational levels, with disabilities, and from minority ethnic backgrounds are reported to be less likely to engage in arts and cultural activities (APPGAHW, 2017). The 2015 Report by the Warwick Commission for the Future of Cultural Value threw this disparity into stark relief. Concentrating on engagement with "high" art, NEELANDS et al., (2015, p.33) noted that between 2012 and 2015 the most wealthy, most highly educated and least ethnically diverse 8% of the U.K. population accounted for at least 28% of theater visits, 44% of attendance at live music events and 28% of visits to visual art exhibits. [10]

NEELANDS et al. observed that socio-economic status, professional occupation and university education are the strongest predictors of cultural engagement in Britain. Furthermore, the authors argued that children from low income/low

1 Here, we understand "community" in broad terms, in relation to shared geographical location, identity and/or interest.

educational attainment families are less likely to participate in arts or cultural activities, be employed in cultural and creative industries, or have parents who value or identify with publicly-funded arts and cultural provision. As they noted, this gap between those from more wealthy/high social status groups and poorer/low social status groups is only increasing in the U.K. with austerity, and actions such as the closing of many public libraries. [11]

This participation gap is particularly poignant since those groups who are reported as engaging least with the arts and culture are also those who have the most to gain in terms of their health and wellbeing impacts. Children from lower socio-economic status groups, for example, have reduced life expectancy, and greater incidences of mental health diagnoses, respiratory diseases, stroke, obesity and heart disease than those from wealthier families. Indeed, the U.K.-based Marmot Review noted gaps between rich and poor of an average seven years' life expectancy and seventeen years' disability-free life expectancy (MARMOT et al., 2010). [12]

3. Arts and Community in the Hangleton and Knoll Area

In the current study, we sought to illuminate and address these inequalities in arts access in an economically-deprived area in the east of England, Hangleton and Knoll. The Hangleton and Knoll ward is made up of four estates with a total population of approximately 15,000 across 6,142 households. There is a greater than national average number of both children/young people (under sixteen years old) and older people (sixty-five and over) in the area (Brighton and Hove Community Insight Data, cited in Hangleton & Knoll Project, HKP, 2018, p.17). 32% of local people aged sixteen to seventy-four are in full-time education[2] and 27% of adults have no formal academic qualifications (ibid.). The ward has high levels of economic deprivation. On the Knoll estate, for example, 24% of children are classed as living in poverty and 21% of people have a life-limiting long term illness (ibid.). It is important to recognize, however, that while some areas of the ward are ranked amongst the most deprived 10-20% of neighborhoods nationally, other areas are not considered to be economically-deprived (Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion, OCSI 2020a, b). Furthermore, despite the high levels of overall economic deprivation, approximately 86% of local residents have reported feeling "satisfied with their neighbourhood" (OCSI, 2020a, p.2, 2020b, p.2).[3] [13]

Hangleton and Knoll lies within the district of Brighton and Hove. The district as a whole has a thriving cultural sector, with over sixty festivals a year that are either arts-centered or have a notable artistic component, and multiple arts programs, companies and venues (BIRCHALL et al., 2018). According to the recent "Brighton and Hove Economic Strategy" report (cited in BIRCHALL et al., 2018,

2 In the U.K., full-time education is defined as "more than an average of 12 hours a week supervised study or course-related work experience" [https://www.gov.uk/child-benefit-16-19 [Accessed: June 16, 2021].

3 These data are taken from the Place Survey, which ran nationally until 2008. Unfortunately, no more recent data are available; however, partners at HKP have noted that these high levels of self-reported community satisfaction reflect their experiences of working with the local community in more recent years.

p.14), Brighton and Hove has "five times as many jobs in the performing arts, twice as many in video/film production, and over four times as many in artistic creation compared with the national rate" (ibid.). Researchers for the Active Lives Survey (2015-2017) meanwhile, found that 73% of Brighton and Hove city residents had engaged in arts activities three or more times over a twelve month period, compared to a national average of just 50% (p.12). [14]

Within Hangleton and Knoll, however, arts engagement is reported to be significantly lower. BIRCHALL et al., for example, noted that fewer than 15% of local residents booked tickets for Brighton Dome or the high profile Brighton Festival in 2017 to 2018. This low rate is similar to other economically-deprived wards in the region and contrasts notably with the 43% of residents booking from within the central Brighton area. BIRCHALL et al. highlighted cost, distance, lack of time and lack of interest as key reasons for this disparity. These figures, however, obscure the presence of numerous arts activities, groups and events in Hangleton and Knoll, including a program of resident-led activities aimed at the over fifties (such as "Sing for Better Health," "Crafty Adults" and "Men in Sheds") and a program of activities for multi-cultural communities (such as "Bollywood Dancing," the "Egyptian Coptic Christian Association String Art" group and a book club). Between May and July 2021, these groups ran a total of fifteen weekly sessions across twelve different activities.[4] Another local arts activity of note is the "Our Place" arts festival. Our Place (formerly "Your Place") was established as a response to Brighton Festival 2017's Guest Director Kae (then Kate) TEMPEST's call to take Brighton Festival out into surrounding communities at no cost to local residents. It now runs annually as part of the Brighton Festival program in May, as a partnership between the local community, HKP, and Brighton Dome and Festival. [15]

4. The Current Project: Forging a Community-University Partnership

The spark for the current study was ignited when the second author approached the University of Brighton to form a partnership to enable HKP staff and volunteers to understand more about local people's engagement with the arts and to agitate for greater support for the arts locally. The impetus for this came from a funding call released by the University's Community University Partnership Program (CUPP), in response to a successful U.K. Research and Innovation grant bid. CUPP was established in 2003 with funding from Atlantic Philanthropies and has been funded by the University of Brighton since 2006, with the aim of developing and promoting impactful and sustainable university-community engagement. Staff at CUPP seek to connect university and community partners and nurture the development of these partnerships in mutually-productive relationships (FOX, in press). To date, they have worked with over 150 academics, 3000 students and 500 community partners (UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON, n.d.) and received seven inter/national awards (FOX, 2020). [16]

4 See https://www.hkproject.org.uk/docs/news/2021-04-29-HK50+Activities-May21toJuly21Covid-19Offer.pdf on the over fifties program andhttps://www.hkproject.org.uk/docs/news/2021-04-29-MulticulturalActivitiesLeafletSummer2021.pdf on the multicultural program [Accessed: June 8, 2021].

The current project was funded as part of CUPP's Ignite program, a twelve month incubator project to develop new partnerships and support co-production between the university and community organizations (FOX, 2020, in press). The program funded seven projects which were co-led by university-based researchers and community organizations, and underpinned by a social learning space (WENGER-TRAYNER & WENGER-TRAYNER, 2020) where partners met to network, share learning and develop ways of working collaboratively. [17]

4.1 Community-university partnerships: Principles and practice

FACER and ENRIGHT (2016, p.50) defined community-university partnerships (cups) as "a relationship in which anyone from the community who is not at the university collaborates in some shape or form with someone from the university who acts as a member of the university and not as a citizen in some other capacity." Partnerships are typically between university researchers and community groups, voluntary organizations or other, third sector bodies. Community here is understood as something of an ideological construct, representing "a desire to live and work together for mutual benefit, rather than for the enrichment or accumulation of power by a few in society" (WARD, BANKS, HART & PAHL, 2019, p.203). This lends itself to a focus on social justice and transformation which is characteristic of cup work. Those working in cups seek to effect this social transformation by enhancing capacity within the community, empowering citizens and/or modifying social structures (RODRIGUEZ & MILLICAN, 2007). [18]

Collaboration in cups is envisaged as occurring through mutually-beneficial partnerships, underpinned by co-production and skill/knowledge exchange. The research impact, in turn, derives from this synergy, rather than any one, single contribution to the partnership. This model thus challenges the common tendency to position community members as passive research subjects or recipients, repositioning them instead as active partners who can add considerable value across research, teaching and enterprise, providing practical knowledge and intimate understandings of communities, facilitating access to marginalized groups, and enriching ecological validity and research impact (MARTIKKE, CHURCH & HART, 2019). [19]

Co-production can occur in conversations and other interactions, as well as in the production of research objects. Indeed, as SIRY, ALI-KHAN and ZUSS (2011, §1) have observed, "at every level knowledge that is co-produced is lived and felt." Accordingly, proponents of cups parallel community arts participants in valuing processes/practices at least as much as products/outputs. In this context, relationships between partners become foregrounded (HART, MADDISON & WOLFF, 2007) and research can be understood as a relational praxis (VAN KATWYK & SEKO, 2017). Successful relationships, and thus successful cups, rely upon partners trusting one another, sharing a vision for the project, and taking power sharing seriously (MILLICAN, NUNN & FOX, 2007; STRAND, CUTFORTH, STROECKER, MARULLO & DONOHUE, 2003). [20]

True co-production is, however, relatively rare in practice. Indeed, both academic and community partners have voiced concerns that partnership is often merely given "lip service" to in order to meet national and institutional research agenda or funding body criteria (MARTIKKE et al., 2019). Nonetheless, the past five years have seen an increasing number of U.K.-based university staff adopting community engagement and partnership approaches. The SEE Changemaker Network, for example, includes some thirty U.K. universities that share an interest in impactful social innovation and entrepreneurship (FOX, 2020). Conversely, there is a burgeoning desire amongst communities to contribute to academic knowledge production (FACER & MCKAY, 2018). In line with this, there has been a notable, global increase in cross-sector partnership working in recent years (MARTIKKE et al., 2019). [21]

4.2 Finding our feet: Defining the terms of the current partnership

As noted previously, this research project was instigated by HKP in response to a funding call from the University of Brighton's CUPP. This initiation from within the community meant that we avoided a common challenge of participatory and cup research—that of igniting interest within the target community and recruiting sufficient co-researchers from within it (see, for example, VAN DER VAART, VAN HOVEN & HUIGEN, 2018). CUPP then brokered a partnership between HKP and the first author, and the funding bid was developed collaboratively. The project was thus co-produced from the outset. This enabled both partners to ensure that the work was closely aligned with their respective agendas and commitments. FOX (2020, in press) and others have argued that this mutual closeness of "fit" is vital to the success of cups in a context where individuals from both domains are expected to produce ever greater impact/outputs with ever-dwindling time and resources. [22]

This close pattern of partnership working continued with the remainder of the "research collective."[5] Thus, while the university and community leads (the authors of this article) determined the overall shape of the project, this was refined, adapted, enacted and acted upon in collaboration with the whole collective. One of the first actions we undertook as a collective was to define two research questions, namely:

1. How do local residents understand and engage with the arts?
2. How can we increase opportunities for local residents to engage with the arts?[6] [23]

In the research described here, we focused on the first of these two questions, since it was clear that our findings regarding this would determine the shape,

5 "Research collective" is a term used in collaborative poetics to refer to the team that designs and carries out the research. This team includes academic researchers, community researchers, and often also artists. The term references both the artistic focus of this methodological approach and the horizontal power structure within the research team, where each member participates as an equal status co-researcher.

6 "Engagement" here is understood to include both attendance at arts events and participation in arts activities (FANCOURT & FINN, 2019).

direction, and indeed necessity, of any research addressing the second. Thus, in investigating this first question, we were able to gain some insight into the second. Furthermore, as will be discussed, we were also able to support outcomes which spoke to this latter question. [24]

5. Method

5.1 The collaborative poetics approach

The collaborative poetics (CP) method was founded by Helen, the first author, at McGill University's Participatory Cultures Lab in 2016. The approach is described briefly here and in greater depth in JOHNSON et al. (2017, 2018). CP is located within participatory approaches on the one hand and the broader field of arts-based research on the other. Arts-based research incorporates a wide array of approaches which draw from the arts as tools for data collection, analysis and/or dissemination (LEAVY, 2009). These innovative methods stretch the bounds of the traditional academic form, with "outputs" ranging from poetry books and novels to theatrical performances, films and interactive websites (see JONES et al., 2008 for some excellent and wide-ranging examples). This opens up social scientific knowledge to larger and broader audiences, exposing them to something which is more accessible, playful, emotional, embodied, meaningful and, above all, *human* than the typical academic output (JONES, 2006). Arguably, such innovative forms of representation have the ability not just to *convey* knowledge differently, but to express *different kinds* of knowledge that cannot be represented adequately through other means (EISNER, 2008). Furthermore, they offer a means for researchers to reconnect with their data and their emotional responses to these, and arguably to decentralize dominant Western epistemologies (VAN KATWYK & SEKO, 2017). [25]

CP draws specifically on the arts-based research methods of poetic inquiry (e.g., FAULKNER, 2020) and autoethnography (e.g., CUSTER, 2014; ELLIS & BOCHNER, 2000). It takes from poetic inquiry the use of poetry as a research tool, and from autoethnography a focus on personal experiences to describe and transform the world. Co-production with research participants (and artists) allows these features to be combined and strengthened. Accordingly, community researchers are understood in CP as equal status co-researchers with the power to shape a study's design, conduct and outputs. This means that community researchers can benefit, not only from research outputs, but also the skills, knowledge and sense of power/authority they gain from contributing to the co-production of these outputs. This participatory approach allies to the cup model, seeking to address power inequalities between researcher and researched, and empower community co-researchers to make meaningful changes within their communities (FREIRE, 1997 [1971]; KAGAN, BURTON, DUCKETT, LAWTHOM & SIDDIQUEE, 2011; PARK, 1993). [26]

CP researchers seek to facilitate social change by building critical (or social-justice based) resilience within communities. In doing so, they draw on the power of arts-based and creative research methods to build community resilience by

providing new ways of understanding lived experiences, new ways of knowing and sharing knowledge, and a means of contributing to community action (VAN DER VAART et al., 2018). Critical resilience is a response to the more mainstream, individualistic ("bootstrap" or deficit) model of resilience, which has been criticized for focusing on individuals' ability to thrive in the face of adversity, consequently overlooking or even reinforcing the structural inequalities which give rise to this adversity in the first place (HART et al., 2016; TRAYNOR, 2018). Proponents of critical resilience criticize the individualistic focus of this deficit model, while seeking to preserve the rhetorical power and theoretical/practical efficacy of the concept of resilience. Rather than reducing social and structural issues to individual deficits, as per the mainstream, neoliberal model, critical resilience scholars acknowledge systemic/structural inequalities, and reposition resilience as the basis for activism and social change. In addition (and in contrast to the neoliberal model), they understand resilience as something which can be a feature of groups, communities and systems, rather than just of individuals. Interventions based on critical resilience are thus used to promote psycho-political literacy, educate people on how to overcome oppression, and empower them to tackle inequalities (HART et al., 2016). [27]

5.2 Backstage: Forming the research collective and design

The research collective for this study was formed of the academic and community leads (this article's authors), seven local residents (the Our Place festival steering group), and a representative of local arts organization Brighton People's Theatre. Resident co-researchers had been working with one another and with the community lead as part of the festival steering group for between one and two years prior to this research. They were offered the opportunity to participate via email, and verbally in a steering group meeting. All group members chose to participate. Co-researcher contributions were acknowledged through one-off voucher payments. The research collective was also given a group budget of £400, and each member was provided with a copy of the "Collaborative Poetics Resource Pack" (JOHNSON et al., 2019), which includes guidance on carrying out CP research and a selection of arts-based research activities.[7] [28]

The collective members were trained in CP during two workshops at a local community center. In the first workshop, the CP approach and resource pack were introduced. In the second, the group consolidated its mission as a collective, defined the research questions, discussed research ethics, and sketched out a research design. Co-researchers participated in several creative activities during these workshops and their subsequent work together, following steps outlined in the resource pack. These activities were used to define the group's principles and research focus, build positive working relationships within the collective, investigate co-researchers' values and understandings around the arts, and learn about CP practice. We describe examples of two such activities below. [29]

7 The pack and accompanying audio-visual resources are available online at: http://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/collaborativepoetics/resources/ [Accessed: June 8, 2021].

5.2.1 The manifesto

CP is an ideological method underpinned by the shared values of a research collective. The development of a group manifesto (or statement of aims) can prove valuable in helping a collective explore, articulate and communicate these values, cement its vision and strengthen its working relationships. In this research, co-researchers were introduced to the idea of a manifesto in the first workshop and shown the CP manifesto by way of an example. They were then given a series of prompts, for example: "Our work as a group is ..." and "everything we aim to do is ..." and asked to bring their responses to these prompts to the next workshop (see JOHNSON et al., 2019 for the manifesto and full list of prompts). In workshop two, these responses were discussed and used to agree a manifesto. Manifestos are public documents, designed to communicate a group's identity and aims to others in an engaging and eye-catching manner. The form/presentation of the manifesto is thus important. It is therefore significant that the co-researchers' manifesto was subsequently embroidered by one member of the collective (Rhianydd Summersett) before being displayed publicly (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Co-researchers' manifesto. Please click here for an enlarged version of Figure 1. [30]

Informal feedback from co-researchers and other stakeholders indicates that the completed manifesto concisely and powerfully articulates the group's shared vision, values and ways of working. Whilst the collective had worked together previously, its members had never before taken the time to explore their shared vision. This activity addressed that omission, acting as a valuable means of cementing and articulating their group identity and agreeing to core aims in connection with arts in/with the local community. [31]

5.2.2 Cut-up poems

The cut-up method has long been used by poets, songwriters, video artists and others to kick-start the creative process and throw their work into new light. It was popularized by BURROUGHS through work such as his novel "Naked Lunch" (1962), though its origins go back further. When using this method, participants cut up sections of texts (in this case, events magazines, flyers and programs from local arts venues/events) and reassemble them in a new order/pattern to create a new text. Words may be also combined with visual media to form a multi-media collage. [32]

In CP, cut-up poetry offers an accessible and playful introduction to poetic inquiry and means of exploring difficult or provocative issues. Furthermore, it can be used to facilitate critical resilience by disrupting and subverting authoritative or familiar texts. Cut-ups were used here to enable co-researchers to explore their ideas around arts engagement and local arts provision, and to facilitate the sharing of these ideas within the collective (see Figure 2 for an example cut-up created by co-researcher Bobby BROWN).

Figure 2: Co-researcher's cut-up poem. Please click here for an enlarged version of Figure 2. [33]

5.3 Front of house: Carrying out research in the community

Following the initial CP workshops, co-researchers opted to use a qualitative questionnaire to collect data from the local community. This included both open and closed questions, such as: "What do you think of when you hear the words 'the arts'?"; "do you currently do anything you consider to be part of the arts? (If yes, what?)"; and "do you think there is a need for a dedicated art space in the local community?" These questions were drafted by the community researchers with feedback from the first author. [34]

Data were collected through written questionnaires distributed at the Our Place festival, and through local community groups and events. This was a pragmatic decision utilizing the resources and networks available to co-researchers. We acknowledge, however, that this recruitment strategy may have skewed the sample towards participants who were particularly oriented towards supporting the arts and/or community locally. 119 responses were received. These were then analyzed in a third CP workshop facilitated by the first author. Following this

workshop, the first author and one co-researcher produced a data poem from the questionnaire responses. [35]

5.3.1 Creative content analysis

We initially analyzed the questionnaire data using a collaborative, creative content analysis technique. Content analysis is a generic method, which can be applied to a broad range of topics by researchers operating within widely differing theoretical frameworks. Within the arts, it has been used to elucidate: art psychotherapy (EGBERG THYME, WIBERG, LUNDMAN & HÄLLGREN GRANEHEIM, 2013); changing depictions of designer fashion in European newspapers (JANSSEN, 2006); HIV and AIDS prevention in African song lyrics (BEKALU & EGGERMONT 2015); and representations of sexuality and sexual health issues in youth slam poetry (FIELDS, SNAPP, RUSSELL, LICONA & TILLEY, 2014), to name just a few applications. [36]

Content analysis provides a clear, systematic and easily replicable method for analyzing texts. It is far from homogenous, however, and there are several different approaches residing under this broad methodological umbrella. One frequently-drawn distinction is between "conceptual" and "relational" content analysis (e.g., ROSSI, SERRALVO *&* BELMIRO DO NASCIMENTO, 2014). Conceptual content analysis is probably the most widely known form. It is based around the identification (typically counting) of instances of words, sentences or themes in a text. Relational content analysis is more complex, and is used to explore the relationship between concepts elicited. In this study we drew on the simpler conceptual method, focusing on explicit mentions of terms only (rather than incorporating implicit references, as is sometimes the case). Conceptual content analysis is rather a crude tool, which lacks the sensitivity of methods like thematic and discourse analysis, producing a less rich and subtle account of the data (HAYES, 2000) that tends to equate frequency with significance (KELLEHEAR, 1993). Nonetheless, the simplicity, accessibility and efficiency of this method made it an ideal pragmatic tool for the current context. [37]

We carried out the content analysis coding inductively. Co-researchers were divided into two groups. Initially, each group looked at half the questionnaires and derived a preliminary keyword list. Word lists and questionnaire samples were then swapped between groups for co-researchers to build and refine these lists. Subsequently, co-researchers agreed to a final list of keywords, for example "community for all," "craft" and "happiness." Finally, each member of the collective selected the word or phrase to which they were most drawn and made a collage around this, using a range of materials including pastels, colored pens and clippings from local arts programs (see Figure 3 for an example created by Sara GREGORY).

Figure 3: Content analysis collage [38]

5.3.2 Poetic inquiry: Creating a data poem

Data poems (sometimes deemed to be a subset of "found poems") represent perhaps the most popular form of poetic inquiry. While these may be created following more mainstream analytic methods like thematic analysis (e.g., JOHNSON et al., 2017), we opted to use PRENDERGAST's (2015) time efficient "surrender and catch" technique. Here, researchers seek to "surrender" critical judgement and "catch" salient sections from a dataset before composing these into a poem. In doing so, PRENDERGAST has advised attending to: the aesthetic power of the language; imagery/metaphor in the text; the ability of the data to "capture a moment"; illustrations of truth telling/vulnerability; the provision of critical insight (especially through empathy); and the element of surprise. [39]

Data poems are typically researcher-led, with participant involvement limited to the provision of "source" data (for example through interview responses). Thus, they remain an external, academic commentary on a participant group. Indeed, SJOLLEMA and BILOTTA (2016) argued that poetic inquiry is rarely characterized by a commitment to, and immersion in, the community of study. This is at odds with the aims and principles of CP and of cups. With this in mind, we chose to create our research poem as a collaboration between the first author and co-researcher GREGORY. Our creative process here was informed by, and followed from, the content analysis. First, we each looked through the questionnaire data independently, highlighting salient responses. We then

collated these excerpts and compiled them into a poem in a way that preserved both their language and meaning, while maximizing aesthetic and affective impact. [40]

5.4 Ethical considerations

When designing and carrying out this research we abided by ethical guidelines set out by the University of Brighton and by the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2018), as well as HKP codes of practice. Core concerns here were informed consent, confidentiality and the acknowledgment of/respect for community researchers' contributions. With regard to informed consent, co-researchers were informed both verbally and in writing of the project's nature, aims and intended outputs at the point of recruitment. We then refined the project further as a collaborative enterprise and no major decisions were taken without the full consent of all co-researchers. We thus understood consent as a fluid and continuous process. [41]

For community participants (questionnaire respondents), full details of the study were presented in writing and consent assumed by the return of the completed questionnaire. Respondents were able to withdraw their data from the study by emailing the second author, though no participants did so. Within the collective, co-researchers were free to withdraw at any point or opt out of any activity without giving a reason. No co-researchers took up this option. Voucher payments were made at the start of research and were not conditional upon further participation. [42]

While there is a presumption toward anonymity in standard ethical guidance, this is complicated here. It is arguably meaningless, for instance, to anonymize co-researchers who have chosen to speak publicly about the research at (academic and community) events, just as it is arguably unethical to anonymize co-researchers who seek ownership of their artistic work. This speaks to a more general tension in participatory and arts-based research between preserving anonymity and giving due credit to community researchers/artists as equal status co-contributors (e.g., SARNA-WOJCICKI, PERRET, EITZEL & FORTMANN, 2017; WILSON & FLICKER, 2014). We have therefore opted, in conversation with co-researchers, to credit the authors of artworks presented here, while keeping the remainder of the collective anonymous. [43]

6. Arts Inclusivity in Hangleton and Knoll

A small number of participants reported that art was irrelevant or inaccessible to them. It is likely that this belief reflects a Big "C" model of creativity, which rests on a narrow definition of the arts as an exclusive domain reserved for elite arts, artists and those educated to engage with these. One respondent, for example, commented that art is "for posh people," indicating they associate the arts with more privileged, upper classes, while another participant reported that they "would quite like to see open air theatre but ... I worry I'm not clever enough to understand it." This latter quotation demonstrates a tension between a desire to engage in "high" status arts and a feeling that they are not good enough for these, lacking the intelligence, and perhaps cultural capital, to engage with this art form appropriately. Such comments would seem to support claims made in the "participation gap" literature that people from lower socio-economic groups or living in economically-deprived neighborhoods are less likely to engage in arts and cultural activities than those from other, more privileged groups (e.g., APPGAHW, 2017; NEELANDS et al., 2015). [44]

Nonetheless, many participants said that they either already participated in the arts or wished to do so. Indeed, contrary to claims made in the participation gap literature, the data revealed both high levels of arts engagement and a thirst for greater arts provision locally, with almost 54% (n=61) of questionnaire respondents stating that they currently participated in the arts in some way. Respondents reported engaging in a variety of arts and crafts activities, from "rock painting," "wood carving" and "puppetry" to "choir singing," "embroidery" and "sensory board making." Several participants also specifically mentioned arts activities they carried out with their children, for example: "I have two children at primary school and together we paint, draw, dance, sing and play, make and create." When asked what the arts meant to them, participants listed a wide range of activities and forms, including "high" status arts like "theatre," "sculpture," "ballet" and "art galleries," and "low" status arts like "comedy," "textiles" and "crafting." This suggests that participants understood the arts as a broad spectrum that includes not just big "C" creative pursuits, but also everyday and small "c" creativity (KAUFMAN & BEGHETTO, 2009). [45]

Using keywords, the first author classified these responses into "high" arts, "low" arts or "ambiguous" references. When ambiguous references were removed, this revealed a split of 56% (n=74) "high" art references to 44% (n=59) "low" art references in relation to how participants defined the arts. When asked about their own activities, however, only 23% (n=19) of references related to "high" status arts, compared with 77% (n=65) which related to "low" status arts. This suggests that there is a disjunction between how members of economically-deprived communities define the arts and the kinds of art forms they engage in, with the latter being more dominated by "low" status arts and crafts. Again, this may suggest a greater sense of relevance and ownership for "low" status than for "high" status arts amongst economically-deprived communities. [46]

Participants appeared to greatly value creative and artistic activities. This was apparent in the resounding call for a dedicated local arts venue, with just over 97% (n=110) of respondents saying that they wished to see such a venue established. This echoes FANCOURT and FINN's (2019) contention that siting arts in local communities and dedicated arts venues is important for arts engagement. Interestingly, participants said that they would like this venue, not simply to provide a space in which people could learn about and share art, but also to nurture community interactions and relationships. Thus they stressed "community engagement," "inclusivity," and the ability for people across the community "to express themselves." Accordingly, participants saw in a dedicated local arts space the potential to act as a hub for relationship building, community cohesion, the reduction of social isolation, and an enrichment of individual and collective wellbeing. These concerns map insightfully onto research that indicates the arts can be used to forge connections between diverse (race, class and gender) groups, to strengthen interpersonal relationships, and to reduce loneliness and social isolation (APPGAHW, 2017; BIRCHALL et al., 2018; FANCOURT & FINN, 2019; SCHER, 2007). Thus, participants sought:

> "A community hub that would act as a space for local creators who do not have space to pursue their art. That provides space for activities for children, young people and other groups. A gathering place for people in the community" (Questionnaire data). [47]

There is a clear emphasis here on building relationships amongst different groups in the community, as well as a recognition of a paucity of resources locally which may act as a barrier to arts engagement. [48]

Rather than viewing the arts as unimportant or irrelevant, then, many local residents were well aware of, and keen to embrace, the health, wellbeing and community benefits of the arts that have been highlighted in meta-analyses and reviews produced by the World Health Organization (FANCOURT & FINN, 2019), the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing (APPGAHW, 2017), and the Warwick Commission for the Future of Cultural Value (NEELANDS et al., 2015), amongst others. [49]

Participants also cited a range of issues that prevented them from accessing the arts, however. These responses were particularly notable since we did not explicitly ask about barriers to accessing arts provision in the questionnaire. The most common impediment mentioned was cost; for example:

> "I would like to join [a] painting class for watercolour or even colouring pencil[s] but something affordable. Most of these class[es] are very expensive ... the fantastic arts that take place in Brighton and Hove are often out of our price range, and a journey away" (Questionnaire data). [50]

It is clear that this participant values city-center arts provision, but feels unable to engage in this. This contrasts with the claim in BIRCHALL et al. (2018) that people in economically-deprived areas of the region lack interest in, or awareness

of, these arts activities and events. It does, however, support BIRCHALL et al.'s assertion that distance is an obstacle to arts-engagement within these communities, suggesting that this impediment is at least partly due to the associated cost implications of traveling outside the immediate area. There were other issues that made distance a barrier to accessing the arts too, for example, one participant noted: "[I] have a local friend who would love to do jewellry, she's disabled and has some social anxiety so can't access courses anywhere, but locally she'd be ok." As this illustrates, mental health issues like "social anxiety" and "agoraphobia," and disability/physical health issues like "cataracts and arthritis" were also cited as barriers to arts engagement. This mirrors findings that people with disabilities and health conditions are less likely to engage in arts and cultural activities than those from other groups (APPGAHW, 2017; BAKLIEN, 2000; BIRCHALL et al., 2018). [51]

In summary, the data indicate a rich and thriving local community that contests the deprivation discourse so easily established around economically-deprived areas like Hangleton and Knoll. Rather than rejecting the arts, participants participated in a wide range of arts activities and valued these greatly. Arts engagement was nonetheless limited by a range of external barriers. These barriers were particularly effective in restricting access to arts that were located outside the local area and/or were viewed "high" status. This suggests that observations of a "participation gap" in arts engagement rest partly on a reductionist, elitist notion of what constitutes "art." [52]

As discussed previously, we rendered these findings creatively in the form of a collaborative data poem. The poem, composed by the first author and one of the community co-researchers, Sara GREGORY, is presented below.[8]

> (Art is) happiness training,
> activities that make you smile,
> excitement, expression and involvement,
> public fun,
> colour,
> the not strictly necessary things that make life worth living,
> giving yourself time,
> (to) give it a go.
> I am creative in the things I do.
> Being part of the community,
> I love to make,
> get involved.
> If you can use a glue gun for it—I'll do it!

8 The brackets here indicate where words have been added to the data to preserve the flow of the piece.

A dedicated art place,
community hub,
(is) essential.
Some regular space for all levels and abilities,
all ages, all cultures,
a gathering place,
flexible, open,
(to) encourage one another,
with something for everyone,
the opportunity to learn,
engage the mind.

I worry that I'm not clever enough to understand it,
but I love to try new things,
inspire or heal, explore or educate,
(in) a safe space,
(that) lets the kids express themselves,
a nice, calm space,
welcoming and friendly,
(with the) possibility to do different things,
to think outside the box,
(and) thrive,
encourage encounters,
(and) show other people,
posh people going to art galleries, opera, ballet, the theatre,
(that) it is never affordable,
out of our price range,
and (always) a journey away,
not for (us). [53]

7. Dissemination and Impact

The collective disseminated research findings to key stakeholders and local community members at a sharing of learning event held at a local community center. Attendees included local government councilors, members of community/arts groups, and representatives from local arts venues/organizations, including Brighton Dome and Brighton Festival. The event featured: presentation of the research findings (content analysis collages, the data poem, and independently-commissioned infographics); locally-produced artworks; the manifesto; and a series of discussion/activity tables. The discussion tables were designed to follow a "world café" format.[9] Four tables were covered with tablecloths, and set with a large piece of paper and collection of colored pens. On each paper we posed a different prompt, (e.g., "What could be done to support local people in creative activities?" and "What is our vision for a dedicated art space in the community?"), which audience members responded to verbally and in writing. Members of the research collective facilitated the table discussions. Attendees were also encouraged to complete an action plan during the event, describing contributions they could make to supporting arts in the local community. [54]

Residents, representatives of regional arts organizations and members of local government attending the event made a number of pledges to support local arts provision, including volunteering to share skills with others in the community and offering support to secure a dedicated local art space.[10] The breadth and number of skill sharing offers received demonstrates again the dangers of applying a deficit-driven model to economically-deprived communities, in that doing so makes it all too easy to overlook the rich contributions residents can make to the community. Pledges to support a local arts venue, meanwhile, represent a vitally important move towards facilitating local arts engagement by removing barriers around travel, underscoring the message that the arts can *belong* to local people, and providing long-term arts provision. [55]

This research was also instrumental in enabling local residents to secure funding to support local community and arts development, and in leading HKP to bolster the role of the arts in their work. Thus, for example, the organizations have added a dedicated arts strand to their community learning program, and partnered with the Fabrica art gallery and Brighton and Hove Food Partnership to provide arts activities and resources during the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, the research enabled co-researchers to develop their skills, knowledge and sense of self-efficacy. As one co-researcher said, "my confidence and sense of worth has grown since being involved in this [research]" (cited in FOX, 2020, p.46). Pending funding, we hope to further build on this work and develop our cup in a second piece of research focused on a more in depth investigation into the specific needs and barriers faced by different groups within the local community. [56]

9 See http://www.theworldcafe.com/[Accessed: June 8, 2021].

10 Negotiations to establish this space as part of a new housing development were underway at the time of writing, but had been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

8. Conclusions

Our work with Hangleton and Knoll residents suggests that interest and engagement with the arts amongst economically-deprived communities may be much greater than is often reported. This raises the question of how researchers can consistently find such stark disparities in arts engagement between the wealthy and poor. We would contend that these observations can be explained by two factors: Firstly, there are a range of barriers that prevent poorer people from engaging with the arts, including cost, travel and mental/physical health difficulties, as well as a belief amongst some that the arts (particularly "high" status arts) do not belong to them. This means that levels of engagement are likely to vastly under-represent levels of interest, but also that the range of engagement is often limited to arts activities that are local and low cost. Secondly, the notion of a "participation gap" relies upon a reductionist notion of art as limited to "high" status arts, which omits a wide range of arts and craft activities that people from economically-deprived communities do engage with. This not only indicates a pressing need to support arts provision within economically-deprived communities, but also suggests the need for a re-evaluation of the "participation gap" literature. [57]

In this article we have demonstrated the merits of community-university partnerships as a tool to empower local communities to advocate for, and develop, the arts provision. This supports the contention made by FOX (2020), MARTIKKE et al. (2019) and others that cups can produce research that is more meaningful and impactful for communities than top-down research executed by scholars dislocated from these communities. Our research also supports the efficacy of CP as a methodological approach. For example, we parallel VAN KATWYK and SEKO (2017) in finding that collaborative writing can support self-construction, self-discovery and relationship building within groups of co-researchers. Most importantly, we have observed that CP is able to produce research that is relevant to, and impactful for, the communities with which we work. These impacts occur both through the creative research *process*, for example through building a sense of group identity and supporting individual skill development, and through its *products*, for example, the creative collages and data poem, which proved to be emotionally-arresting means of engaging and inspiring key stakeholders. [58]

There are, of course, limitations to this research. One of these, as previously discussed, is the representativeness of the questionnaire sample, which favored participants in local community groups and arts events. This is something that future researchers could attend to by recruiting participants more widely within the community. Social desirability may also have impacted the findings, particularly as participants were aware that the research was being carried out by a community organization that champions the arts. This issue is especially relevant to the questions that asked whether respondents would like to see greater arts provision locally. Social desirability is a more difficult issue than representativeness to address here; however, a method which can be used to elicit more rich, detailed data, like interviews, could enable researchers to explore

this potential bias. A third limitation relates to the amount of time required for this research, and the consequent financial implications. In particular, while there was a budget available to fund co-researchers' time, this was very limited, and members of the collective gave considerable time to the project for little financial recompense. [59]

This last limitation speaks to a greater tension within both participatory and cup research (see for example VAN DER VAART et al., 2018). This kind of research is resource-intensive and may not always yield immediately observable impacts. Furthermore, the relationships which lie at the heart of these partnerships need to be developed over time. It is thus necessary to invest in cups over the long-term, and this requires institutional support (CONLAN, SILVERWOOD & WOOLMER, 2007). Such support is both increasingly difficult to obtain and increasingly important in a context where funding cuts and demands on workers' time squeeze university and community partners alike, pushing them to confine themselves ever more to "core" roles that produce quantifiable, short-term outcomes. [60]

Finally, it is important that we do not use the arts as a mere "sticking plaster" for trauma and inequality (what BAKLIEN, 2000, p.238 has described as an "instrumental approach" to the arts). The arts can be disruptive and unsettling, and this is an important part of the role they play in society. In addition to emphasizing the potential impacts of the arts for individual health and wellbeing, then, it is important to consider how they can be harnessed to promote a "critical" or "social justice-based" resilience, which works towards systemic social change, targeting the underlying inequalities that limit the health, wellbeing and arts access of marginalized groups on a grander scale. Nurturing creative, community-university partnerships offers one means of achieving this important aim, and supporting marginalized communities to confront the inequalities that have such a profound impact on their lives. [61]

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